



**Zephaniah Wk. 3**  
**On the Day of Sacrifice**  
**By Pastor Jody May 05/17/2026**

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**[CALL TO HEAR]**

**The Day of the LORD Is Near**

- <sup>7</sup> Be silent before the Lord GOD!  
For the day of the LORD is near;  
the LORD has prepared a sacrifice  
and consecrated his guests.
- <sup>8</sup> And on the day of the LORD's sacrifice—  
"I will punish the officials and the king's sons  
and all who array themselves in foreign attire.
- <sup>9</sup> On that day I will punish  
everyone who leaps over the threshold,  
and those who fill their master's house  
with violence and fraud.
- <sup>10</sup> "On that day," declares the LORD,  
"a cry will be heard from the Fish Gate,  
a wail from the Second Quarter,  
a loud crash from the hills.
- <sup>11</sup> Wail, O inhabitants of the Mortar!  
For all the traders are no more;  
all who weigh out silver are cut off.
- <sup>12</sup> At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps,  
and I will punish the men  
who are complacent,  
those who say in their hearts,  
'The LORD will not do good,  
nor will he do ill.'
- <sup>13</sup> Their goods shall be plundered,  
and their houses laid waste.  
Though they build houses,  
they shall not inhabit them;  
though they plant vineyards,  
they shall not drink wine from them."
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**Pastor – “People of God, this is the Word of God.”**  
**People – “Thanks be to God.”**

**Pray**

**Illustration.**

From *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous*, to *The Simple Life*, to *Keeping up with the Kardashians*, *The Real Housewives Series* to *MTV Cribs*, Americans have always had a fascination with how the rich/successful live. Whether we watch to see how the rich have no coping skills for discomfort, or we laugh at how they perhaps lack real life skills, or if we are honest, we are really a little jealous of their lifestyle. Whatever that fascination is it is hard not being interested in what people buy and what they are interested in when money is not an option. The problem is sometimes when we watch those shows, it births in us a bad desire for a little of what they have.

The power of **money** is a hard thing to master, **\$ is not the thing that makes one happy**, but having it **helps** a little when **you are not that happy**. Often, what happens is we turn to money for more happiness when it was never meant to be that. It is a tool like everything else in our lives; it is a created system of order given by God to help bring the Glory of Him to this world, that's it. Christ warned us though, of what happens when we begin to trust in it more than we trust in God.

**Introduction**

**Matthew 19:23-24 ESV**

<sup>23</sup> And Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven. <sup>24</sup> Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.”

Money/Systems can become every bit of an idol as the false gods we have been reading about in the OT. In fact, many times the people of Israel were tricked into false god worship because of the lure of easy money and what it brings, by watching those with power, worship other gods, and getting



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blessed by worldly means. These same people, those with power/influence, we discover today are held to a higher accountability, as seen this is where God starts with judgment, with His day of sacrifice, a sacrifice of punishment, He starts with those that have led the people astray.

As we remember v. 7 from last week, there is a day of judgment coming, a **Day of the Lord**, and it is on that day God offers a sacrifice, and it is this week that we learn who it is He will start with. Now as we go forward just know that v.7 is a linchpin/hinge verse, it connects verses 1-6 and 8-13 together. You can see for yourself how it is done with the first line in v. 8, "**And on the day of the Lord's sacrifice**" that points back to v.7 where the **Day of the Lord** begins with a sacrifice. And from last week we know now what specific group of people that is. As well you should also pick up that Zeph has started with a universal proclamation (mentioning things included with all of creation vs. 2-3) and then narrows it down to a people (Judah vs. 4-6) and then it is narrowed down further to certain offices among those people (8-11), and then lastly what is the specific sacrifice of punishment that will be dished out (12-13).

I also want you to see something in the text today, where God is known as a God of justice, and our God does take vengeance, He does not wipe out indiscriminately though. In other words, He doesn't carpet bomb everyone, He is very particular about how He doles out judgment. In v.12 it says the LORD searches Jerusalem with lamps, that is when it would be easy to judge everyone by their leaders' actions and do away with all, but the LORD by His divine power searches out in the dark hiding places where sin is. He looks at the heart of people, He judges motives, He judges intent, that is what makes Him such a just God. Everyone gets what they deserve, no one gets away and no one is punished more than is necessary. In other words, family I wanted to assure you, even though our God is to be feared for His wrath and righteous judgment, He is still mighty to save and looks at the inner man to judge Him rightly. ([1 Sam 16:7](#); [Jer 17:10](#); [Ps 44:21](#); [1 Chron 28:9](#))

Today we are going to work through Zephaniah's progression, which will show God's righteous and deserving sacrifice of punishment, and I think then we will save our call to action to the end. So today here's how we will cut this up in chewable bites. First, we will look at the **Judgment of Leaders**, that is



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where God goes first to rightful blame. Not that all men are not responsible for their sin, but there is a higher degree of accountability for those called to lead. Second, we will look at the **Judgment on the City**, as in how God casts the sacrifice of punishment specifically on those He is dealing with. Then lastly, we will look at the **Lord's Lamp Searching out Hearts**, how we can take comfort in the thoroughness of God's righteous judgment in the **Day of the Lord**.

**MP**

***Deny the lifestyles of the corrupt,  
And cling to the life of Christ.***

**1. Judgment Upon the Leaders.**

- <sup>8</sup> And on the day of the LORD's sacrifice—  
"I will punish the officials and the king's sons  
and all who array themselves in foreign attire.
- <sup>9</sup> On that day I will punish  
everyone who leaps over the threshold,  
and those who fill their master's house  
with violence and fraud.

Starting on this Day of the Lord's Sacrifice, the time directly after the divine silence of v.7, where there are no more excuses, no more apologies, and no more redemption, this sacrifice of punishment begins with a specific grouping of people. These people are of the house of Judah, we learned in week one (4-6), and now we see that God goes to specific individuals in that nation. In verse 10, Zeph even alludes to what city it will happen to. Again, showing God is specific/calculated, there is no generality in His judgments.

Zeph says, "***I will punish the officials and the king's sons***". We have two groups of people, two sets of leaders representing different divisions. First, we have the officials/official leaders, the elders, the ruling class of the people. Then on the other side we have religious leaders, the priests and the Levites. They both make up the admiring heads of state for the people of Judah. And being that this takes place in the capital, it means their actions in this one city



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acts as a federal form of government, as in what they do in Jerusalem dictates as to what happens in the surrounding countryside. Their decisions affect everyone and being that it functions that way, centuries earlier when they first came into the land of Canaan, God gave them rules and guidelines for leadership.

We don't have time today to read all of it, but if you want to read for yourself later God gave these rules in Deuteronomy 16 and 17.<sup>1</sup> Moses the first national leader leaves what he has learned about leadership to those that would come after him.

The summary of guidelines for Israel's leaders in Deuteronomy 16-17 are:  
- Judge fairly and without bribery or favoritism - Protect pure worship and oppose idolatry - Investigate accusations carefully - Require proper witnesses before punishment - Respect the lawful religious and civil order God established - Punish proud rebellion against righteous authority - Rule under God, not as absolute men - Avoid trusting in military power, wealth, women, or political strength - Know, read, and obey God's law continually - Remain humble before God and among the people.

And we are well aware of what the intrinsic law of leadership is, you live out your convictions as an example and people will imitate you; that's how leadership works. So, the reason the Day of the Lord has come for Judgment first to Jerusalem is due to the failed leadership of the civil variety, the leaders of government.

Then in the next line of v. 8 we see those "**arrayed in foreign attire**". This is referencing the priests and the Levites, those that instruct/implement worship (priests) and the assistants of those priests that enforced the religious rules (Levites). At first glance that can seem vague or confusing, but the clue is that Zephaniah is zeroing in on clothing then a particular action of **leaping over a threshold** in v.9 - both references in that day held religious connotations. Those two things tell the reader we are talking about religious leaders of worship.

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<sup>1</sup> See appendices.



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You know, it has always been important to God for those that lead in worship that what they wear reflect the truths about the God they worship. God gave specific instructions for His priests (Ex 28-9; Lev 8 & 19) as to what to wear and what not to wear and what those things on their special priestly robes meant. God even gave directions for the attire of all Jews, the wearing of tassels on their garments to remind them of the commands of God and that there be no mixing of materials as to show holiness and the separateness from other religions (Num 15 & Deut 22).

We can see the beginnings of this in Chapter 3 of Genesis where Adam and Eve thought to hide their shame with leaves. But it was God that found them, He removed their attempts at covering their sin, He also removed their guilt and shame by slaying animals and providing skins for them to wear. He provides a solution that would last, compared to the temporary covering done by Adam and Eve. Even in the beginning family we see that what was worn by God's people was to reflect the love of God for His people as in He is the one that deals with their sin, He is the one that doles out justice, and even the clothes that you wear reflect your heart towards God. Clothing in the Bible is about telling the story of how God is the one redeeming us in Christ. It is the wearing of God's character displaying to the work He will make a way, He will cover, and He will provide.

So, the Clergy were wearing foreign attire and leaping over thresholds. Besides looking silly that meant something in the ancient world. You read a few weeks back in 2 Kings 10; 22 that priests of Baal are identified by their clothing. Jehu, as an instrument of God, on that day used it to condemn them to destruction. And now in Israel the priests of God were identified the same way as the prophets of Baal. You see clothing in Canaanite tradition was identified by bright/flashy appearances to identify with their gods and their physical blessings. The priests of Judah were more worried about being seen for their appearance than representing God. They were the Creflo Dollars of their day.

Now as far as jumping over thresholds besides looking silly, what was that about. Well, you also read in 1 Samuel 5:5 that upon the Philistines temporary victory over Israel, they had taken the ark and placed it in the temple of



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Dagon. At night though the head of Dagon surprisingly was lopped off and rolled onto the threshold of the temple. That started the tradition of the priests jumping over the threshold because it was looked as disrespectful and sacrilegious to step on it. So, what we are seeing here is idolatrous worship, syncretism again. Dagon, the father of Baal, is being brought into the temple of God in Jerusalem, the priests are practicing demonic rights and unprescribed worship, in the one True God's presence.

This story illustrates what James taught, in 3:1 that *not many should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach or lead will be judged with greater strictness*. That also illuminates Paul's qualifications for elders in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. Those qualifications for leadership in the church are so strict and how it must be done is above reproach as it holds fast to the teaching of the Gospel because leaders are not exempt but in fact, they are held more accountable.

Leaders who act like this who cast away their holiness for haughtiness and when that haughtiness takes over there is no room in the heart for God's people. You read on Friday in 2 Chronicles 28 Judah's whole army wiped out because of the evil king Ahaz and the civil/clergy that supported him. How many women were made widows that day? How many sons and daughters lost their fathers, how many parents were left with no descendants? Syncretism never brings union and peace with the world rather it destroys the welfare of God's people. And what's worse, many times the leaders escape immediate consequences while the people suffer.

Judgement was coming in Zephaniah's day for faulty and depraved leadership, and it arrived in 586 BC with Nebuzaradan, captain of the Kings Guard, when he surrounded the city and starved them out, destroyed the temple, captured King Zedekiah, made him watch the death of his heirs and took his eyes so that it would be his last visual memory. Judgement came and was finalized when King Nebuchadnezzar ensured the rich rulers' lines, the civil magistrates and the priests, would end as well, by making them eunuchs in the King's palace in service to him. Their sins found them out.



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The Day of the Lord arrived again 6 centuries after Zephaniah prophecy when the 2<sup>nd</sup> temple was enjoying its' privilege as the religious capital of Judea. It was Passover week, and Jesus' first action after entering Jerusalem was to enter the temple and to enact judgmental prophecy against, who else, but the priests and the Sanhedrin itself, the ruling parties of the Jews. They had made the Temple a **den of robbers**, they had initiated false worship practices, instead of helping the people get to God they hinder their approach!

They had filled their Master's house with violence and fraud. They ran a monopoly on the animals to be offered, they overcharged everything and enforced unnecessary rules, not to help people get to God, but to bar the door from Him. The Master returned home though to His Father's house, charges them as a den of thieves/robbers; marauding gang that seeks not to just steal goods but destroy lives. He then cleans out the temple, and who can stand against Him? No one, they are all afraid to touch Him! And Jesus begins a mighty work that week in His deeds. He acted as their King cleaning out the robbers and instills a new order, He taught as the greatest of prophets, as a better Moses, all week in that Temple, and He finished the work that week by being our High Priest as He went to Calvary, as our Passover Lamb.

What's more and you know this to be true, after his sacrifice the veil is torn, and Jesus becomes the cornerstone of the new temple. And now we are all built up on Him, on His work, on His teachings, on His sacrifice, wearing His imputed righteousness, which in Revelation is seen as a white robe. That's what Baptism points to, it shows that Jesus has made a new way, He has come for His people, there are no more unjust rulers that can keep us from Him. We are buried with Him, and we are raised to walk in new life under His leadership, and nothing can deter that anymore.

Family that's where this comes down to you. Perhaps you have been wearing the attire of the world. You are still caught up in what you have to do to get to God, or you portray a mixing of worldly thought by trying to find your contentment outside of Christ. Are you wearing the foreign attire of this world, do you jump through the hoops that it says you have to jump through to be successful or are you following the ways of your true king? Jesus says I am *the way*, are you following Him? When we do, we are safe from judgment but



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in the next verses we see the end result of those that chose to follow false leaders.

## 2. Judgment Upon the City.

- <sup>10</sup> "On that day," declares the LORD,  
"a cry will be heard from the Fish Gate,  
a wail from the Second Quarter,  
a loud crash from the hills.
- <sup>11</sup> Wail, O inhabitants of the Mortar!  
For all the traders are no more;  
all who weigh out silver are cut off.

What we are seeing is a movement from the palace and the temple to the business district. Remember Zeph is royalty, he knows how things trickle down in his city, he's a part of the social elite, these are places he frequents. Zephaniah is tying a connection from the faulty/violent rulers to those that are held underneath their sway.

The Fish Gate is on the North end of the city. It is the area that trades for fish from the nations that take route from the Mediterranean sea. They specialize in foreign coin and customs; their money is not dependent on locals, but they grow their wealth from the nations. But it is also from the *North*, that in prophecy writings, that God's judgment comes from. There is a "**wail**" that comes up and a loud "**crash**"! These things are the sounds of war, that is how those words are used in Hebrew texts. These aren't the sounds of parties; these are the horrific cries of people caught up in violence.

Coming from the North, Zephaniah is not alluding to directly here Babylon, but the alluding to is that the LORD Himself will come for judgment. Babylon is the instrument, but they are guided by the Lord's hand. You see what's on the hills outside of Jerusalem to the North, that is where you find the high places of worship that you have been reading about that so many kings will not tear down. They don't want to upset the masses; they just keep tolerating idol worship. Well, that is exactly where the LORD will come through and He will tear down those places Himself. All the Asherah poles, all the false altars to Baal, there is battle in the hills and the Lord will prevail!



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Then Zephaniah calls for lamentation of the wealthy, **"wail oh inhabitants"** - the business district, the wall street of their day, cry for it is all over! The walls you have built, the homes that you have constructed on top of the older homes built before you, the remodels, the new streets, the nice gardens, it has all become the mortar where you shall be crushed.

You see a mortar is that bowl you see used in making medicine where Drs. take a pestle and crush up the mixture in a mortar. Those that have trusted in false leadership, those that put their hope in money and systems of the world, they would literally be caught between a rock and a hard place with nowhere to run. AND when that end comes you see business/**traders** are cut off and the money/**silver** runs out, all of it was God's anyways as a tool. Just as Jesus taught us the parable, that new barns don't protect a rich person's investment for themselves, it just holds it to pass it along to others to be used when you are gone ([Luke 12:13-21](#)).

I think this illustrates for us so well the absolute foolishness of putting our hope in the money and systems of this world. Right now, we can so easily be lured into wailing like these folks, *oh my 401 took a big hit, gas went up again, the price of building materials doubled, there are people who can't afford homes, education, food, healthcare, fill in the blank....* And every time we use government to lean on for our happiness, to control markets, commodities, and success what happens, **FRAUD!** Then corrupt leaders use our fear to push ideologies like socialism OR corporate ownership of all, have you noticed **people in power want everything**? They use fear to get you to keep giving them power. Family, the Lord Jesus is your King, put your trust in Him and fear not!

You see one day this entire order will be done away with guys, in His judgment, it won't be what can you do by the power of your coin, it won't exist! Our **hope is NOT built on MONEY**, it is built in the one who gives and takes away! Family we are not citizens of this world anymore; we are citizens of the Kingdom of God, and we are already tied into that system of living. We are just sojourners, we are passing through, the coin we use today comes from God to do His bidding. Don't look at money as your Salvation, that system is



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not eternal, but the LORD is! Put your trust in an eternal Kingdom, put your Hope in a God that has never lied, put your cares in the one who controls all markets to bring about His purposes. Let us set our hearts on the things above where neither moth nor rust can destroy our investments ([Mat 6:19-20](#)).

You see that is so important to do, you don't play with the heart's affections, you repent and turn to putting trust in God, for Zephaniah finishes this section with a serious truth.

### **3. The Lord's Lamps Searching Hearts.**

<sup>12</sup> At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps,  
and I will punish the men  
who are complacent,  
those who say in their hearts,  
'The LORD will not do good,  
nor will he do ill.'

<sup>13</sup> Their goods shall be plundered,  
and their houses laid waste.  
Though they build houses,  
they shall not inhabit them;  
though they plant vineyards,  
they shall not drink wine from them."

Zeph says that the Lord will come and **search Jerusalem with lamps**, He's searching out to punish the men, the leaders and those easily led, those who are complacent – **"those who say in their hearts, The Lord will not do good, nor will He do ill"**. It's not that they don't believe in God, it's that they just don't care, they have no faith in His desires to act, they have mistaken His continued Grace as weakness.

All they have done is lulled themselves into destruction. You see, minding your own business, just following the rules of the land, being a good citizen, supporting democracy and all the rights of others, going along with leadership even when you know it is wrong, makes you guilty in the eyes of



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the LORD. You can't just sit by and go along with cultural norms; we can't serve two masters.

Family I remind us all like earlier, the Lord searches us out by His light. That word for lamps in v.12 is an uncommon word for lamps used to identify the lamps in the temple, those light sources that light up and illuminate God worship on earth. The Lord comes on the Day of Sacrifice for punishment, and He does not look to see if your actions were nice, quiet, and demure, He looks at the Heart of men to see if they are drawn to Him, He searches to see who turns towards His light, not away. His light is the one that goes deep into the destruction of the town and searches through the rubble, and it finds the survivors of the collapse, they are rescued, the one's whose hearts belong to Him. God, even when it looks like vast and wide destruction, spares His elect.

Lastly, it says the goods, the houses, the vineyards, life and all its enjoyments will be turned over to the judge, that is God. Back in the OT Babylon got them, back in Jesus' day Rome acquired them, and in the future all these things return to the original owner the LORD.

[Deuteronomy 6:10-11](#). There was a promise given to God's people in Deut that the cities, homes, wells, and vineyards will be yours, the ones you did not build. Prophecy and promises are often repeated throughout the Bible, and they always point to a future **Day of the Lord**. Family, we don't worry about the now, we don't freak out about the now, because in the future ALL IS OURS! The earth and all that is in it is under Christ, and we are under Him as His new leaders and developers, and all is ours to use for Him and for His glory. And what was once intended for a sinful purpose has now been redeemed to bring Him glory. We shall be the ones that drink from the vineyards that were prepared for false leaders and complacent citizens, the best wine has been reserved for us the guests at the wedding feast of the Lamb, Jesus our King!

**[CALL TO OBEY]**

**1. Put away worldly trust and cling to Christ alone.**



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Reject the false security of money, status, influence, and cultural approval. Examine where your heart has been dressed in “foreign attire,” and repent by pursuing contentment, holiness, and obedience under Christ your true King. The biggest work in doing this family, is actively choosing to lay down one worldly habit and replacing it with a habit of worship.

**2. Refuse complacency and lead your home in faithful worship.**

Do not say in your heart that the Lord will not act. Since God searches with lamps, walk in repentance now: practice earnest prayer, Lord’s Day preparation, home worship, and courageous obedience, so that your household is shaped by the fear of God rather than the spirit of the age.

**MP**

***Deny the lifestyles of the corrupt,  
And cling to the life of Christ.***

**Charge**

People of God do not be seduced by the attire, treasures, or false securities of this age, for the Lord sees through every disguise and searches the heart with perfect light. Therefore, cast off complacency, cling to Christ your King, and walk in humble obedience, trusting not in riches, rulers, or systems, but in the Lord who judges justly and saves completely. And as you go, lead your homes in faith, repentance, and worship, so that when the Day of the Lord comes, you may be found resting in the righteousness of Christ and not in the fading glory of this world.

**Prayer**

Our gracious God and Father, keep us from worldly compromise, from complacent hearts, and from trusting in things that cannot save. Fix our eyes on Christ, clothe us in His righteousness, and make us faithful in our homes, our church, and our daily walk before You. Grant that we would live soberly, worship sincerely, and endure steadfastly, for Your glory and our good.

And we pray for those among us today still trusting in the schemes and systems of men and this world. Please open their eyes to the truth that there is but one God in heaven and earth, and He has provided the only way for



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eternal life. My friend call out today on the name of Jesus, for the forgiveness of sins, ask Him to be Lord of your life, and come join His people in sweet worship. Amen.

## **Communion**

### **Mark 14:22-25 ESV**

#### **Institution of the Lord's Supper**

<sup>22</sup> And as they were eating, he took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." <sup>23</sup> And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. <sup>24</sup> And he said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. <sup>25</sup> Truly, I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

Today when you eat of the bread remember the life of Jesus which was lived for us. We recount today that very special week where Christ fulfilled all of His divine calling as prophet, priest, and king. By His offices He cleared a way for true worship of God, He lived as we all should in total service to His Father, and He gave all He had even His life in service to the LORD. Once again, He has done what we failed to do. All praise to our Savior, who loved God in perfect obedience.

Today when you drink the juice remember the cost of our sin displayed by His blood for the new covenant. His last act was as our perfect high priest as He gave Himself on Calvary for our sins. By His sacrifice He has clothed us with the robes of righteousness, that displays His provision, His Grace, and His steadfast love. If not for this Grace, we would still be trying to follow the dead-end ways of this world. Thanks be to our Lord for His eternal sacrificial love!

## **[CONFESSION OF FAITH]**

\* The Congregation will stand



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Elder – **“Christians, what do we believe?”** Congregation – recites:

**Elder recites LBCF 1689 Chapter 1. Effectual Calling Leads to Repentance**

Some of the elect are converted later in life and have lived for some time in their natural state, serving various sinful pleasures. As part of their effectual calling, God gives them repentance to life. 1

1. Titus 3:2-5

**Congregation recites the LBCF 1689 Chapter 2. Believers Are Renewed Through Repentance**

There is no person who does good and does not sin. 2 Even the best may fall into great sins and offenses through the power and deceitfulness of the corruption living in them and the prevalence of temptation. In the covenant of grace, God has mercifully provided to these believers who fall into this sin renewal through repentance to salvation. 3

2. Ecclesiastes 7:20

3. Luke 22:31-32

**[OFFERING+LAST SONG] “The Steadfast Love of Christ”**

**[BENEDICTION]**

Go in the name of the Father, that will preserve His people even on the day of judgement by the gracious gift of a heart that can worship Him.

Go in the name of the Son, who comes and searches our hearts looking for true worshippers, and who creates in those same hearts new affections for God.

Go in the name of and power of the HS, that gives us a true hope in our future not ones built on the schemes of men, now go and share this good news with those who need some good news today!



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**[ FELLOWSHIP CONVERSATIONS ]**

1. **Where do we see complacency in our own hearts or homes?** Zephaniah condemns those who say, in effect, that the Lord will do nothing. What are some practical ways spiritual complacency shows up in family life, worship, work, or repentance?

2. **Why does God begin by naming leaders, officials, and the king's sons?** What does this teach us about the responsibility of leaders in the home, church, and society? How should this shape the way we pray for and evaluate leadership?

3. **What outward sins and inward sins are both condemned in this passage?** The text mentions violence, fraud, compromise, and also unbelief and indifference. Why is it important to see that God judges both public wickedness and hidden heart-sins?

4. **How does this passage drive us to Christ?** In what ways does Zephaniah's warning about the Day of the Lord help us better understand Jesus as both Judge and Savior? How does the gospel answer the terror of deserved judgment?

5. **What should repentance look like in a household that takes this passage seriously?** If a father, mother, single adult, or child wanted to respond faithfully to this text, what specific changes might be needed in habits, priorities, speech, money, worship, or relationships?



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## Appendices

**1 - 1. Judges must judge righteously.** From Deuteronomy 16:18-20, leaders appointed as judges and officers were to: - Judge the people with just judgment- Not distort justice - Not show partiality - Not take bribes - Pursue justice faithfully This means Israel's leaders were to be men who feared God more than men, refusing corruption and favoritism. Justice was not optional; it was a covenant duty.

**2. Leaders must guard true worship.** In Deuteronomy 16:21-22 and 17:1, Israel was forbidden to mix the worship of God with pagan practices or offer defective sacrifices. So leaders had to: - Keep worship pure - Refuse idolatrous symbols and pagan customs - Ensure sacrifices were acceptable and not blemished A ruler in Israel was not merely a civil manager. He was responsible to preserve the holiness of the nation under God.

**3. Evil must be investigated carefully and judged lawfully.** In Deuteronomy 17:2-7, if someone was accused of idolatry, the matter had to be: - Investigated diligently - Established by two or three witnesses - Not decided on the testimony of one witness alone Then, if guilt was proven, judgment was to be carried out publicly and lawfully. This shows leaders were to be neither careless nor soft toward evil, but neither were they to punish on rumor or haste. Justice had to be careful and true.

**4. Hard cases were to be brought to the appointed central authority.** In Deuteronomy 17:8-13, difficult legal cases were to be taken to the place God chose, to the Levitical priests and the judge in office. The people were required to: - Seek judgment from the lawful authority God established - Obey the sentence given - Refuse proud rebellion against lawful judgment This teaches that leaders must uphold order, and the people must not treat lawful authority with contempt. Persistent rebellion against righteous judgment was itself evil.

**5. Kings were allowed but strictly limited by God.** In Deuteronomy 17:14-20, the future king of Israel is described. He was not to be an autonomous ruler, but a covenant king under God. He had to be: - Chosen by God - From among his brothers in Israel, not a foreigner He was forbidden to: - Multiply horses for himself - Cause the people to return to Egypt for military power - Multiply wives for himself - Multiply silver and gold for himself This means the king was not to trust in: - Military strength - Political alliances - Sensual indulgence - Wealth

**6. The king had to live under God's law.** Perhaps the most important requirement is in Deuteronomy 17:18-20: The king was to: - Write for himself a copy of the law - Read it all the days of his life - Learn to fear God - Keep and do the words of the law - Remain humble, not lifting his heart above his brothers So the ideal Israelite leader was: - Just - Obedient to God - Opposed to corruption - Hostile to idolatry - Careful in judgment - Humble - Not self-exalting - Governed by God's word rather than personal appetite



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